Family' Therapy by brodie-wan

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Summary: In which the Party members realize their need to talk about their experiences and call a 'family' meeting. This fic should be three or four chapters at the most.

Family' Therapy

A/N: 'Party of Lies' is a bust for now. I'm tempted to delete it, but I won't for now. Great spark of an idea with no subsequent inspiration. This fic, which should only be two or three parts is my priority. Only part 1 will be in this format I hope you enjoy.

'Family' Therapy

Chapter One

Will

Will Byers hadn't slept alone since the Mind Flayer had been driven from his body. Granted, it had only been a week, but the first three nights he was in his mother's bed, the next three his bother Jonathan slept next to him in his bed, and on night seven, he was back with his mother. Every night, without fail, the Shadow monster would appear to him as in his waking vision in the Upside Down. He would wake up screaming or in a cold sweat or shaking as if having an epileptic seizure. His mom and brother were at their wits end about how make the nightmares stop. There was no reason to believe he was still under the cold thing's influence. Hawkins lab was a empty tomb, but sometimes he wished the useless help that Doctor Owens offered was still available. Sometimes, useless help was still help.

Mike

It had only been a couple of weeks since El had closed the gate and shadow monster had left Will. But it had been more than a year since his best friend had been abducted and held prisoner in the Upside Down. More than a year since El had killed the demogorgan and saved his life. Thank God she was still alive. If not for that, Mike Wheeler might be truly lost. Dungeons & Dragons was one thing, even scary movies with hideous creatures another, but none of it compared to a living, breathing, monster from a dark dimension actually trying to kill you. He had dreams. He had nightmares. He would toss and turn all night, never getting a good night's sleep. He didn't want to sleep, to see the blooming, tooth filled face of the demogorgan. He didn't want to run for his life, fleeing from a pack of

demodogs. He also didn't need the panic induced by the thought that this time Will would be gone for good. He had people who would understand the horror. He knew they were experiencing the same things. He needed to talk. They all did.

Dustin

For Dustin Henderson, the experience with El and the Deomogorgan was part insanely awesome and part freaky as shit. The awesome did not cancel the freaky and he, who always put on a brave face, was freaked out! He was afraid that The Mind Flayer would find a way to reopen the gate. He was scared that the master of the demodogs would be coming for him and his friends personally. Part of him thought it was silly that a powerful creature from another dimension would focus its efforts on a group of Middle school kids from a small town in Indiana. But, the other part of him knew that Will had been taken and later possessed. What would be next? He had talked to Steve about, tried to get real with his older friend, but, as much as Steve knew, he didn't want want to talk about feelings and how the experience had fucked them all up. Dustin decided it was time to call a 'family' meeting. Now, he just had to make sure everyone would be there.

Lucas

Max almost made everything okay for Lucas. But not quite. It was cool to have someone to talk to about what happened. Someone he liked, someone who wanted to know and wanted *him* to tell her. After the what she did to her stepbrother and the demodog encounter, she had her owner experience with the Upside Down. Though talking to her was freeing and seemed to lessen the tension he been amassing, it wasn't enough. He never used to snap at his parents or shirk his studies, much less avoid his friends by missing more Party meetings than he attended. He wasn't scared. That was never it. At least, after. Anyone would have been scared during. He was pissed off. Strangely, though, he wasn't angry on the surface. It was was a subconscious anger that he knew could not be allowed to continue. He was pissed at Hawkins lab for what they did and how they treated El. He was pissed at the whole fucking Upside Down for taking Will and bringing its Hell into their lives. He was even still mad at Dustin for the Dart fiasco. It didn't make sense. But there is was. He didn't want to

alienate his friends or parents. Maybe, his sister, but only a little. He loved her even though she was a little brat. At school Dustin said something about getting everyone together to talk it out. It wasn't a bad idea, but he wonder it would ever happen.

Eleven

In the days following closing the gate, El didn't want to do anything. Not only was she exhausted, she missed Mike. If sulking was what it would take to get by, it would be what she did for as long as she could. She had a right to sulk, to feel sad and happy and mad and hurt and trapped. The year with Hopper had been good. She was free from the 'bad men', from Papa, from the things he made her do. In a hidden place, she still loved him. She new it was wrong. No, she was not wrong to love him. He was wrong for using her, for treating her like an animal. That is what Hopper said. Sometimes when she was sad, Hopper would get angry at Papa. Even though he was dead, Hopper would say he wanted to kill him. She would never kill Papa. She couldn't. Maybe she should have. But, she didn't know any better. Hopper had said that too. She knew better than he thought. She had a lot to learn. But she understood a lot. She didn't blame Hopper. He was her protector. Her guardian. He loved her. He said so. She loved him too. She also loved Mike. She sulked some more.

Max

SNAFU - Situation Normal All Fucked Up. This was Max's life. It was Max's life before 'Stalker'. It was Max's life with 'Stalker'. One would think it was enough to deal with having a new stepdad on constant simmer and his son, her new stepbrother, a psychotic rebel who takes his father's abuse and passes it on to her. But, no. She's minding her own business at a new school in a new town and suddenly she has two nerds scoping her out. Said nerds turn out to be both jealous of her Dig Dug skills and, subsequently, drooling over her. Which is weird because Max isn't used to attention from boys, much less science dweebs. However, the Dorky Duo end up being more interesting than she thought. And, soon, Lucas, the cute one (the aforementioned 'Stalker'), is spilling his guts about a monster from another dimension kidnapping his friend as if it really happened. SHOCKER! It really happened! Lucas, Dustin, and a high schooler named Steve, lead her into an ambush of one of these monsters. The

next thing she knows, she's tagging on an underground mission burn it all down. Clearly, her family dynamic was not enough to cause years of future therapy. Now, she can add in demon dogs with Venus Flytrap faces that want to eat her.